

Selling Timber in Iowa

Tough economic times can lead to quick decisions about forest resources on the farm because of the ability to make a quick dollar. There are over 138,000 Iowan's that own trees that are classified as forest on their property. Winter is a time of year when many forest landowners have the opportunity to sell some of their trees. How do Iowan's determine if they are getting a good value for the trees on their property?

Selling trees is like selling grain, livestock or farmland in Iowa. The best way to get the most for your land is to have an auction. Selling trees is similar in determining value. A timber buyer has to consider the species of trees, distance to haul the logs to a sawmill, the quantity and quality of timber for sale, and market conditions for the wood products that will be made from the timber.

How does the state of Iowa sell timber? Although we do not hold an auction in the traditional sense that people come to a site and bid on the timber, we do send out a bid notice to loggers explaining how many trees are for sale and the estimated board foot volume along with the date and location for opening the sealed bids. All of the bidders are allowed to attend the sealed bid opening and the winner is announced.

"The sealed bid method gives everyone interested in buying the timber the same fair chance and it helps the landowner get more for their timber through competitive bidding" says Aron Flickinger, IDNR forester. After all, you wouldn't sell your grain, livestock or farmland to only bidder, would you?

Working with a person that is trained in the field of forestry, such as a forestry consultant or a DNR forester offers many advantages to a landowner. The woodland owner will have a contract signed that will identify which trees will be harvested and the financial arrangements for final payment. "Consultants receive a commission, much like a realtor gets when selling a house, but research has proven the owner of the trees still gets more money for their sale than if they acted independently" says Aron Flickinger. Working with a trained forester will ensure your timber sale is set-up correctly and that the future health of your forest will be sustainable.

"Don't be taken advantage of by the friendliness of a stranger knocking on your door and offering money for your trees. After all, if they think your trees have value, don't you want to explore the opportunity of getting the most from a potential timber sale?" asks Aron Flickinger. The best method to get the best price for your trees is through competitive bidding. The best way to ensure a healthy, productive forest is by practicing good forest management. Work with a forester in your area.

A listing of consulting foresters can be found at <http://www.forestry.iastate.edu/publications/F-361.pdf>. For the local DNR

forester in your area visit our website at:
<http://www.iowadnr.gov/forestry/district.html> or call (515) 242-5966.